

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 AID-20

PC-04 /141 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2024

INFO USCINCSO

UNCLAS CARACAS 10460

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT VE

SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN ELECTIONS: VOTING PEACEFUL

REF: CARACAS 10459

SUMMARY: VOTING IS PROCEEDING ROUTINELY. THE VOTING PERIOD HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO 8 P.M. DECEMBER 9. END SUMMARY.

1. SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL (CSE) ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 8 THAT THE VOTING PERIOD FOR ALL OF VENEZUELA'S 15,011 VOTING TABLES WOULD BE EXTENDED TO 8 P.M. ON DECEMBER 9, AND THAT THE VOTING TABLES WOULD NOT CLOSE UNTIL AFTER ALL THOSE STILL WAITING IN LINE AT CLOSING TIME HAD BEEN ACCOMMODATED. THIS DECISION WAS MADE TO ENABLE THE CSE TO COPE WITH THE REGISTRATION PROBLEMS DESCRIBED REFTEL. SINCE THE VOTE COUNT WILL NOT COMMENCE UNTIL AFTER THE POLLS CLOSE, NO MEANINGFUL RETURNS CAN BE EXPECTED BEFORE THE WEE HOURS ON DECEMBER 10, AT THE EARLIEST.

2. ABOUT NOON ON DECEMBER 9 THE PEREZJIMENISTA FRENTE UNIDO NACIONALISTA'S ALEJANDRO GOMEZ SILVA RESIGNED HIS CANDIDACY FOR

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PRESIDENT, LEAVING TWELVE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES STILL IN THE

CONTEST. THE CSE HAS INDICATED THAT PRESIDENTIAL VOTES FOR THE FUN WILL BE VOIDED, ALTHOUGH THE "SMALL CARD" FUN VOTES (I.E. FOR SENATE, CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, ETC.) WILL BE VALID.

3. VOTING HAS APPARENTLY PROCEEDED QUIETLY AND PEACEFULLY ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. NO SERIOUS DISTURBANCES HAVE BEEN REPORTED, AND POLLING STATIONS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY GUARDED. THE WEATHER IN CARACAS SUNDAY WAS OVERCAST WITH OCCASIONAL SHOWERS. VOTER TURNOUT SEEMS TO BE HEAVY, WITH THE VOTERS IN A RELAXED MOOD DESPITE FREQUENT LONG DELAYS OCCASIONED BY THE CSE'S LAST-MINUTE DIFFICULTIES WITH ELECTORAL REGISTRATION PROCEDURES (REFTEL). EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS VOTING HAS ALSO BEEN ROUTINE IN MARACAIBO, AND THAT INITIAL CONFUSION AT THE POLLING STATIONS THERE HAS BEEN SORTING ITSELF OUT.

4. EMBASSY WILL REPORT VOTING TRENDS AS SOON AS MEANINGFUL DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE.
MCCLINTOCK

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